

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-3, 7, 8, 9, 11-13, 15 and 28-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 4-116051. Claims 1-3, 7-9, 11-13, 15, 30 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Conant US Patent 2,882,742 in view of Merkel US Patent 3,379,643. Claims 4-6, 10 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 4-116051 in view of Ebina et al. US Patent 6,089,117. Claims 4-6, 10 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Conant US Patent 2,882,742 in view of Merkel US Patent 3,379,643 and further in view of Ebina et al. US Patent 6,089,117. Claims 28 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Conant US Patent 2,882,742 in view of Merkel US Patent 3,379,643, and further in view of Rohlinger US Patent 5,373,755.

With respect to the Information Disclosure Statement of September 17, 2008, Applicant submits herewith another IDS along with partial translations of JP 59-39352 and JP 63-132156 as promised by Mr. Schmidt. Consideration of these references is respectfully requested.

With respect to the prior art rejections, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 11 to include the limitation contained in claims 30 and 31, which have correspondingly been canceled. Additionally, Applicant has added new claims 32 and 33. For the following reasons, it is submitted that claims 1 and 11 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

As amended claims 1 and 11 recited that "the tube guide is interposed between the ball scooping portion and the tube guide insertion hole without any clearance between the ball scooping portion and the tube guide insertion hole." On page 5, lines 1-3 and page 7, lines 3-6 of

the Office Action, the Examiner alleges that this feature is disclosed in Figure 3 of JP '051 and Figure 6 of Conant.

However, Applicant respectfully disagrees. Namely, as is clear from both Figure 3 of JP '051 and Figure 6 of Conant (reproduced below), a clearance exists between the ball scooping portion and the tube guide insertion hole.

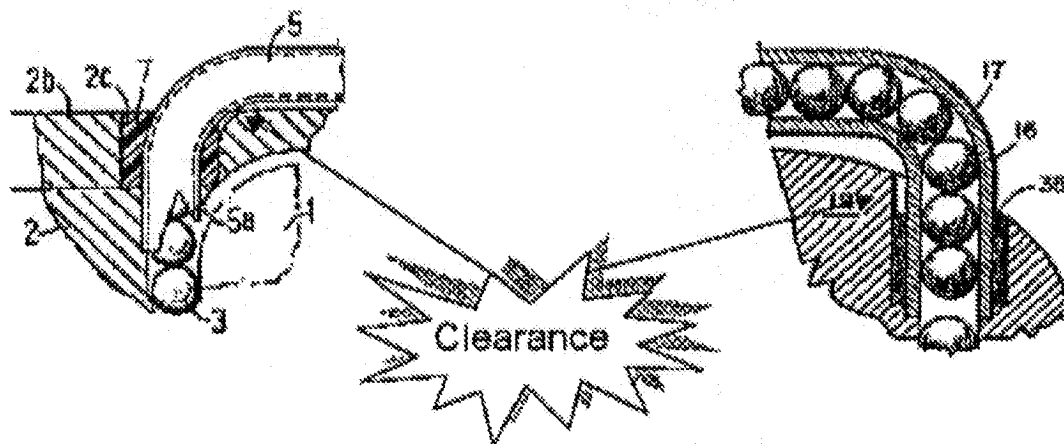


Figure shows FIG. 3 of JP'051 and FIG. 6 of Conant

Moreover, this provides an important advantage as discussed on page 22, lines 2-8 of the specification:

- The claimed invention can enhance the assembly efficiency of the ball circulation tube;
- The claimed invention can prevent damage of the ball scooping portions; and
- The claimed invention can prevent a foreign object from entering into the inside of the nut from an outside.

Based on the foregoing, it is submitted that claims 1 and 11 patentably distinguish over the prior art and that the dependent claims are likewise patentable. In this regard, it is submitted that the prior art does not teach or suggest the requirement included in new claims 32 and 33 regarding the nut including an installation surface on which a lower surface of the ball circulation tube contacts and on which the tube guide insertion hole is formed, and the top surface of the tube guide and the installation surface are disposed on a same plane on both sides of the tube guide.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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